

REWRITE



The Magazine of Effective Writing

Vol. III No. 9.

SEPTEMBER, 1952.

Twenty-five cents

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR TREASURE?

Well, the summer is practically over, the summer conferences are behind you. You have a winter to plan and write. What will you do with the time at your disposal? It does not matter nearly so much how much time you can put into writing as how well you use it. And in a measure of speaking success is entirely relative. For one writer it may be a best seller or a slim quality novel, for another a few features sold to the local paper. It is how you solve your individual problem and grow as a writer and a person that matters.

I know one big name non-fiction writer, a success in his own special field, for whom, I am sure, one well written, salable story, pulp or slick, would be a real triumph, and a winter well spent. I know another writer, a very nice woman who has hardly sold a line, who would give a lot if she could get out of a somewhat similar mental block. There are others we would like to see break out of the ruts they are in. Too many social activities or just selling the same old run of markets that they could hit in their sleep. It takes courage to be a writer, to keep trying, and reaching for the markets that are just a bit beyond one.

Basically, the problem that faces writers through the coming winter, whatever level of ability may be theirs, is the same problem, to use an analogy, as that of the first batter in the line-up. His job is to "get on", to get published somewhere. There is a certain type of writer, who really can do only the literary or slick type of story. It is foolish for that sort of person to waste an enormous amount of time trying to write the pot-boiler he loathes.

But that type of writer is much rarer than many writers would like to think. A lot of writers paradoxically waste time trying ineffectually to write the kind of article or story they cannot do, or are not yet ready, technically speaking, to write. A woman came to me with a plan to write a novel, all because she was told some years ago in school that she wrote good compositions, and a member of her family has lived a dramatic life just like that!

The first thing many writers need to learn is the difference between just writing "for pleasure" and writing to hold and entertain strangers. That is why some of us who counsel writers, if we have consciences, advise writers to begin anywhere they can get some practical experience. Where they can learn, so to speak, to crawl, and to know what is a story and what isn't. Learn how to put newspaper interest and topical immediacy into the article, story or poem they write. Even the poem that is given to the local paper for a special occasion or date, has this quality. And it is a good one, even if some of those critics who dwell in the rarefied atmosphere

of Literature look down on any story, which contains so plebeian a gimmick.

Another fact that writers need to take into account is the strength of the competing writers who are also reaching for the space they want to fill. So many inexperienced or comparatively non-commercial writers do not stop to consider the type of writers they've got to beat out. There are the regular contributors who know the market cold. And behind these are the experienced experts from other fields, who do not know the individual market, but may have years of writing behind them in their own fields of newspaper, radio or what-have-you. I am not trying, of course, to dissuade any writer from writing and selling any field. I am merely advising writers to realize that when they send mss. to the Slicks, they'd better make 'em good!

Few writers we meet, even those who really dig for markets, are aware of the extent of their potential field. That is one reason why I constantly urge writers to try to get on base wherever they can. If you sell, you help your morale, but you also become quite a lot more professional in your outlook. You cannot help but improve your chances of being a better marksman with the type of mss. you are really interested in selling.

Therefore, one thing every writer can and ought to do this winter is to plan out what he or she will try to get done. And if you co-ordinate your program, it is astonishing how you can write fiction and yet do some practical writing on the side. The late Archbishop Temple reserved Saturday mornings for research, study and meditation. He was extraordinarily vital because he allowed himself a regular time to fill himself up. Many writers have to do pot-boilers and at the identical time do their creative writing. That is not easy, but it can be done, if you are creative and orderly in the planning you do before you set one sheet into your machine.

Too many of us allow our careers to develop by chance instead of reserving some time for the serious work and also for the pedes trian. But also there is need to cultivate, just as one does in the garden. Which do you wish to fill your life with, weeds or life-giving vegetables and flowers? It is for each of us to choose. I believe the writer who is busy, even in selling small features to his local newspaper, is less likely to waste his time than the writer who is trying to write more serious stuff exclusively, and doesn't sell at all, or only rarely.

Another thing that writers need to do and many of them don't, is to keep their "writing muscles" limber. If you do not work at a certain type of writing all the time you'll find it hard to be fluent in that field, even though you write in other lines. Ideas beget ideas; the more you think about writing as a job, the more it becomes an opportunity.

REWRITE

Published Monthly by
Writers' Counsel Service, 50 West Street,
Lunenburg, Mass.

<u>MAKE</u>	<u>William E. Harris.</u>	<u>KEEP</u>
<u>THE FREE</u>	<u>Elva Ray Harris.</u>	<u>AMERICA</u>
<u>WORLD STRONG</u>	<u>Editors.</u>	<u>CLEAN</u>

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 25c. per copy, \$2.00 per year in advance anywhere in the world. Copy-right, Sept., 1952. Any reproduction without permission from or credit to the editors is strictly forbidden.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS—we cannot be responsible for changes not received in this office ONE MONTH in advance of taking effect. Whenever possible, please give exact date of change. PROMPT RENEWALS save our time, permit us to publish a better magazine, and bring you an increased value for your money.

URGE YOUR FRIENDS TO SUBSCRIBE. As a matter of policy we accept no advertising. This allows us to report the entire field of writing and selling impartially for your best interests. Therefore, we need support from as many writers and friends as possible in order to give you a better, more dynamic magazine. REWRITE is your magazine. Use it.

IT'S YOUR FUTURE! THINK ABOUT IT!

The American people face one of the great decisions in their history this year. And, certainly, one of the most complex. It isn't just a choice between Eisenhower and Stevenson. Between corruption and clean, orderly, statesman-like government. Much as we deplore the political spoilage in a party which has remained too long in office, we do not think one party is all black and the other white. The issues are much more complicated. A good story-teller could not have balanced and interwoven the issues more neatly, if he had tried.

Leadership of course is the basic element upon which a decision by the voters must be made. But even here the choice is intricate and confusing. Shall it be the man of action or the scholar and thinker? The contrast in personalities and skills is neatly poised. But there is also the question of to what degree each man is free of domination by party and behind-the-scene leaders. How well is each of them likely to lead? Will Eisenhower or Stevenson get on better with Congress and the various international forces? Can Stevenson overcome the terrific handicap of his party's reputation for self-perpetuation and open neglect of the public's interests? Can he stop such goings on, if he is elected? Will he be willing to clean house as it most surely should be done?

The answer to these questions and many we

lack space to raise, are not easy or obvious. They will demand of the electorate an intelligence it has not often displayed in the recent past. Yet the American people will, of course, be called upon to make a more mature and enlightened selection than ever before. We sincerely hope that millions of voters in all parts of the country will not vote automatically for Eisenhower simply because the Country needs a change. With equal sincerity we hope that voters will not go straight down the ballot, but will weigh the "local" problem carefully on the various levels. A clean sweep will not sweep clean this year. That is truer this year than ever before.

We are optimistic enough to believe American voters as a whole are more alert to the seriousness of the election and the opportunity to make every vote count, than they've been in previous elections. We hope the independent vote will be well represented and that everyone will vote as Americans rather than as minority blocs. The time is ripe for a practical, thoughtful decision. We hope a clean, idealistic campaign will replace the usual partisan mud-slinging. We hope, whichever party wins, that the public's insistent demand for codification and improvements in the active functioning of our democratic way of life will be set in motion. It is time for a change all right—a change to orderly, decent government "of the people, by the people, for the people". All the people.

And in closing, may we stress again, that we believe that writers will gain from careful analysis of the basic "situation". This year as never before they can learn greatly from an objective, detached study of the political forces in play. The strength & weakness of the two opposing forces, where reader sympathy lies, the character-traits of the two strong protagonists, and the color, and dramatic tensions underlying the surface interplay. It is a dramatic lesson in dramatic technique.

LET US NOT KID OURSELVES!

Do not let anyone fool you. High taxes and high prices never made any nation permanently prosperous. Wages raised to catch up with economically unsound high prices never stay in one's pocket. It is the little man & his family who pay the differential that's never equalized. Likewise, he pays the bill for a government that wastes and squanders, and, to cover up, borrows on the tax payers' credit. A watered down, cheapened dollar is as lacking in nourishment as a soup of like quality. You can't tamper with money and have it be worth anything.

Whomever you elect, Republican or Democrat, demand of them, and get, a stabilized dollar and an honest accounting of your money—you don't get either at present, because of the way money is "made" to fit the requirements of the Government's unbalanced check-book. Let's have a dollar that is a dollar!

REWRITE

THE MAINE WRITERS' CONFERENCE

A very fine and practical writers' Conference was held at Ocean Park, Maine, on Aug. 7th & 8th, when the 12th Annual State of Maine Writers' Conference was in session. Around 80 persons or more including the staff were present. Many others attended the open meetings. It was the largest conference of writers yet held at Ocean Park. An enthusiastic group of those registered voted at the business meeting to extend next year's conference to three days, and to raise the nominal fees very slightly, to give the officers more room to turn around in when building a strong staff.

Designed to meet the requirements of both serious writers and the more or less permanent summer participants in the Ocean Park Assembly, which sponsors and underwrites this conference, the State of Maine Conference achieved a very creditable program of practical and specific meetings for writers under the able leadership of Rhina Sturtevant. On separate occasions the Conference paid tribute to Harriet Beecher Stowe and the greatly beloved friend and teacher of so many distinguished writers, the late Charles Townsend Copeland, Harvard's "Copey" and a Maine man. It also heard talks from Prof. Robert G. Berkman, of Bates College, trainer of countless important writers, Miss Naomi Harrington, editor of the Boston Herald's column of verse, and Richard Merrifield, editor of YANKEE Magazine.

One of the best meetings was an extraordinary session in which under the skilful editorial leadership of Loring Williams, editor of AMERICAN WEAVE, six of us discussed a variety of writing and selling problems and answered a barrage of intelligent questions from the audience for nearly three hours. It was a great meeting in which the panel of editors learned as much as the audience. The editors (from left to right) were: Bill Harris, REWRITE, Justine Flint Georges, SHORELINES & N. H. PROFILES, Mr. & Mrs. Merrifield YANKEE, "Minstrelsy of Maine" poetry dept. editor, PINE CONE, Dan Kelly, and also Richard Woodbury, Portland Sunday TELEGRAM.

Starting with Loring's warning that writers often attend conferences "Not to learn to write and sell, but to learn how to sell the mss. they have on hand, just as they are," a very wide area of questions was covered. And the interesting fact showed up that writers and the editors were so stimulated that the discussion arose repeatedly in later scheduled and informal meetings, and so was continued in animated form throughout the conference. Rarely have I seen such a smooth & stimulating meeting of minds, with plenty of friendly disagreement or contradictions and qualifications of rough edges, but never any lagging in the quick pace of discussion. Again and again, the questions came faster & more excitingly than we could answer them.

HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Here are the acceptances reported to us in the past month:

Mary Taylor
Fillers: JUNIOR LIFE (Crossword Puzzles)
Sketches: JUNIOR LIFE.

Florence M. Davis
Juvenile Story: JUNIOR CLASS PAPER.

Helen Langworthy
Article: THE GRAIL.
Radio Filler: "Tell Your Neighbor" Program.

Naomi Ingalls
Fillers: GARDENING, RURAL NEW YORKER.
Articles: HORTICULTURE, FLOWER GROWER.

Frances Durland
Juvenile Stories: FORWARD and CHRISTIAN HOME.

Kathryn Wilson
Quiz Filler: VENTURE.

Doris Marston
Prizes: Essay & Contest prizes, chiefly in women's club writing & editing.

Peggie Schulz
Articles: POPULAR GARDENING, N. Y. TIMES,
WESTERN LIVING (Canada), HOUSEHOLD.

Sue Magee
Filler: Modern Home NEWS.

Send us your news. Help us to keep posted on magazine and other market tips.

ADD: Stanley M. Kenney
Poems: FRANCISCAN MESSAGE, PRECIOUS BLOOD and PARISH VISITOR.
Articles: COMPANION OF ST. FRANCIS, RURAL NEW YORKER, N. E. HOMESTEAD.

Fiction Workshop. No. 13. A Flashback Opening. Give the last few lines of your narrative, then fade back into the "secondary present". Show how you would start a flashback. Fewest possible words. Closes: Oct. 10.

No. 14. Start a Scene. Make it so "memorable" we will want to read on. And make it brief! Closes: Dec. 10.

DO YOU NEED ENVELOPS?

We still have plenty of a few sizes:

20 Each (One Fold) \$1.00. Postage extra on (6½ x 9½ & 7 x 10) all orders.

25 10 x 13 (Flat) \$1.00. Best quality.

Send 50¢ for postage for average small order. We will "make change" in additional envelopes. We're closing out our stock.

REWRITE

THE GENTLE ART OF SELLING

One factor in selling that few writers in our experience keep firmly in front of them is the imperceptible change in reader wants as you move across the board of circulation. It is a far cry from blood and thunder to a literary story. But in between there are as many gradations almost as there are readers. And a careful writer figures those changes. He tries to estimate the differences and to direct his appeal to the special audiences, which will be likely to see his published & sometimes much advertised wares.

I can illustrate what I mean. Last night Elva and I and Grandpa Ray went to the movies to see the Walt Disney production, "Robinhood". We could not, of course, escape the teaser previews of coming attractions. The point they sharpened for us was that the motion picture industry, aside from Disney and a few other imaginative folk, too often mistakes violence for drama. It thinks that if you see a man slugged in plain sight, or an animal-like display of hate and sordid cruelty, it is giving you "Life, adventure, sex and Love".

It is doing nothing of the sort. It offers merely an exaggeration and grotesque distortion of the worst tabloid's distortion. As Elva expressed it, you get the sheer physical "thrill" of a rollercoaster ride, as against the more intelligent and emotionally satisfying entertainment of a well played & skillfully fought baseball game, where physical "thrills" blend with the other aspects, the other phases of the complete human true life experience.

On another page we have used the comments of Claire Glass, editor of COMPACT. She has stressed the "maturity" of young people between 15 and 19 years. We think that she is making a point that can apply to adults also. A generation that has lived through almost 50 years of war and unrest, is more mature, and certainly more disillusioned, than the one that preceded it. Therefore, you've either got to outplay the melodrama that we have been experiencing on the world's stage or, like Disney, you have got to get away & not compete with it at all.

In other words, the movies are reaching in the right direction. They seek to appeal to the largest audience in terms of a more obvious type of drama. An intensification and exaggeration that because of the "maturity" Miss Glass speaks of, insults one portion of the motion picture audience. The directors, businessmen executives and even players, too often fail to realize that they now attract not only a pulp audience, but also the more literate minority and the great middle group that ties the two extremes together.

Thus, even in any one segment of the "entertainment world" you have an ever increasing selective audience, which like Elva and

myself, accept good entertainment in kind, but tend to seek out the special shows that appeal especially to it. That is what the fiction editor of FARM JOURNAL, Pearl Patterman was getting at when she spoke in REWRITE and at the Phila. Regional Conference about the "balance" she has to get between a contrasting series of stories. It is what our theater in Fitchburg tries to achieve by running "Robinhood" one week and some of these "realistic melodramas" the next.

This means that as a writer trying to sell a special type of magazine you have to keep your eye on three different factors:

(1) Broad, Overall Type—which extreme does it represent? The literate minority, or the large mass, which delights in the obvious & easy to understand? Or is it somewhere halfway in the middle?

(2) Variation from Type—in every group you will find individual variations. THIS WEEK varies from PARADE. TODAY'S WOMAN is not at all like GOOD HOUSEKEEPING or MADMOISELLE. You have to shoot at a type, but also at the individual pattern within that type.

(3) Balanced Bill of Fare—the same periodical varies from month to month. Just to be interesting to the same group of readers, a magazine must give those readers a balanced diet with plenty of variety & no monotony.

And finally, there is that problem of the same kind of variation of the readers themselves. Certain magazines announce that they cater to the women between 28-35 years. But if they did that exclusively, they would be in trouble quickly. First, because the readers would tire of looking inside themselves and second because other readers on the perimeter of the magazine's circulation read it. Younger women read ahead of their age-group and older women read backward over the years that have passed them by. For these the editor slips in an occasional off-trail story. For editors realize that all life is a series of inter-relationships. And so if these are stressed in the right way, the circulation will be stretched far beyond the specialized and limited category the editor attempts to attract.

For this reason every magazine offers two shots to a prospective contributor. The big certain shot is the story that appeals to a majority of the magazine's special readers. If the magazine seeks to cater to the women of 28 to 35 years, you try to find a theme, strong, exciting, universal in its implications, that will appeal to as many of the women up and down that age bracket as possible. But sometimes the second shot is also worth trying. This is the story that is deliberately off-trail, but which for certain fringe and topical or news-peg reasons will serve as a stimulating contrast. Thus, if you notice a long trend of similar stories, perhaps your off-trail idea will hit the editor socko. A

REWRITE

story of this kind, however, requires careful, well high perfect, timing. It must arrive just at the opportune moment: when the editor is fed up with what he has been making up with for several months, or when the story is badly needed. The right story only one month before it should be published has arrived at the wrong time, whereas it could exert a terrific appeal, if it came in, say five to seven months before the date the editor would like to use it.

This type of selling is not for beginners. Because it combines a skilled instinct with extraordinary luck. You have to know exactly what you are doing, and then play a daring hunch high, wide and handsome. You have to jolt the editor with the unexpected. You have to catch him off balance, surprise him and make him feel that something "different" is just what he has been looking for. It is only accidental when an inexperienced writer achieves this trick. So, it is much safer to know your market and merely hit an editor hard with something unique, but squarely within the type he uses regularly.

What do I mean by hitting an editor "hard" with something that fits stereotype, yet is novel? Miss Glass mentions that. She wants new angles, new developments of the familiar relationships. That is one way. Think up new angles or treatment of the old plots. A second way is to put impact and urgency into your story.

Now it is easy to say that and hard to do it. For urgency is made up of many things. A degree of personal enthusiasm from the writer; great writing that makes the words come alive and move the reader emotionally; story-telling that is exciting and thrilling; a revelation of character that makes the reader exclaim: "This isn't like life, it is life itself!" All these and a lot more, including a conviction that the author knows what he's doing and has an emotional drive to accomplish it. This may be technical enjoyment or righteous anger or love of his characters or other human reactions to his material. But it all adds up to some form of intensity, & it makes the editorial readers say, "That's a story for us; we want it!"

Several years ago, a writer and I devised a double hammerlock to squeeze an editor in two directions at once. THIS WEEK was reaching at that time for both young readers and their parents. Therefore, we planned a series of short stories the author was writing and selling to this magazine, in a way that would attract both types of readers. To the 'teen agers the stories seemed like life; to the older readers they seemed exorcisingly funny: just like "those adolescent kids in our town".

This whole matter of selling adds up simply to a matter of "studying the book" & being wise enough to learn from your gradually accumulating experience. Use your bean!

NEWS AT WCS HOUSE

For country folk who neither advertise nor seek the notoriety of mention in the public press, the partners of WCS certainly receive their full share of spotlighting. REWRITE was mentioned favorably in both the COSMOPOLITAN and YANKEE (Aug. issues). Bill & Elva's pictures were also used to illustrate the article in YANKEE by Loring Williams, editor of AMERICAN WEAVE, while similar use of group pictures placed Bill in the UNH Conference's annual folder (although we did not attend). A report was also given of the jointly sponsored "Durham Chap Book", awarded each year at Durham by AMERICAN WEAVE & REWRITE.

Early in August Bill helped on the staff, at the Maine Writers' Conference (described elsewhere in this issue.) He spent 2 nights at the hospitable home of Doris and Phil Marston in Cape Neddick. Doris had already begun to plan out next summer's conference at Ocean Park. Bill also managed to play a few hours with Paul, Steve, David and sister Jo Marston, lunch with David C. Woodbury & his nice wife, India. And catch a matinee of the Bea Lillie show at the Ogunquit Playhouse. A lot of good shoptalk and stimulation.

At home, we've kept out of mischief with a larger than usual number of mss., including a generous supply of book-lengths. We have managed, however, to garden vigorously, and see the Disney version of "Robinhood" twice—once with our overnight guests, Bob Shaw, headmaster of Solebury School, and his boy & girl, Eric & Jean. A good summer in which our Billy has maintained his paper route.

Poetry Workshop. This month Elva is vacationing again (catching up, she calls it, on paper work, gardening, swimming and canning.) But watch for the Poetry Workshop's analysis of "Grief's Desolation" by Clarence Adams. It was printed in the July & August issues. Send in your comments, if you have not done so.

In December we discuss:

COURAGE

By Joseph Murray Evans

Just like an ant whose sandy home
A broom had quickly felled,
Her world had tumbled down on her
To crush the worth it held.

And like an ant escaping from
His house on powdered sand,
She started to rebuild again—
This time, on firmer land!

Remember! Deadline for comment on this poem: November 10th. Get them in earlier, if you can. Send in your poems. We pay \$1. for each poem we use for discussion. Some of the poems already used have been drastically revised and placed elsewhere.

REWRITE

A VERY DANGEROUS THESIS

In the August issue of AUTHOR & JOURNALIST there was a provocative article about viewpoint by Robert O. Erisman, well known pulp and chain magazine editor. The thing making this article controversial was his theory a commercial short story no longer needs to be kept in a single viewpoint. He readily confirmed the belief of many editors that fiction's "long time first principle" is that: "the writer must be sure the reader is able to identify himself with the hero, in order that the reader can have a vicarious adventure; and this preferably (so that the reader can be involved personally every inch of the way) throughout the story."

But Erisman wondered if this was necessary without exception. He therefore, harked back to stories by Peter Dawson and an exceptional story by Ludwig Bemelmans, a satirical & off-trail series of them, in fact, in a book titled, "Dirty Eddie". He believed that they proved the point, that he gingerly advanced in his article. Gingerly, I say, because Erisman readily admits that "many editors still are cautious...are afraid to touch the 'off-trail' story." He also quickly added in his opinion "breaking all of fiction's time-honored rules" is not the "quick new road" to a writing success. "In fact," he stated, "greater skill than ever is needed when you wander off the beaten tracks".

I consider this article by Bob Erisman an intensely dangerous one, because so many of the inexperienced writers feel that if they can just write in their sloppy, incompetent way, slipping into another viewpoint at any difficult point in the story, they will get freshness and novelty into their stories. A definitely untrue fact.

What Erisman has done is merely to discover the "multiple viewpoint" story. Skilful writers such as Isabel Moore, the first one I remember who uses the multiple viewpoint, have been switching viewpoints for years. A characteristic which Erisman does not refer to, but which is plainly implied both in his rationalization and the stories he describes, is that while the viewpoint shifts, the interest and the spotlight remains focussed on the MC. Read that statement again, please!!

The reason that the single viewpoint story will always remain basically the best of stories is a simple one. Even in these scientific days, a reader cannot read two stories at the same time. And that is what the inexperienced writer writes whenever he goes into a second viewpoint. Erisman points out that by going into the villain you "make it clear to the reader what a terrible antagonist the hero has to cope with". You see, as an editor Erisman is still thinking of that original MC. Only incidentally of the villain. If it becomes the latter's story, there are two stories. Whether you use one or two or more viewpoints, you still have to maintain a single line of interest. The story's

unity MUST be preserved. And that is what a beginning writer does not know how to do. It is why Bob Erisman's article is so dangerous. Thousands of writers will say now that this famous editor says you can be as off-trail, as loose in your writing as you want to. A lot of other editors are going to curse the day Bob gave such bad advice!

The multiple viewpoint story has its uses. It is a stimulating, exciting story device, in the hands of an expert. This is because, you see, it affords a kind of "Strange Interlude" technique in which the reader becomes aware of not only what each character does, and says, but also of what he thinks & feels. This speeds up the story a great deal. Intensifies the emotional impact of it. But a writer who has not yet learned to tell stories in a single viewpoint, cannot possibly expect to tell them in a double or triple or quadruple viewpoint. It is fairly easy, you know, to throw one ball up in the air, then catch it. But would you seriously try to do this trick with three or four balls, unless you had first learned how to handle one ball?

That is why every good teacher of creative writing insists that his students learn how to handle the single viewpoint before seriously trying to sell multiple viewpoint stories. I know one well known teacher who used to be a top editor. He and I agree absolutely on viewpoint. He adopts an even more didactic point of view on the problem of the use of viewpoint than I do. He says that no writer should even attempt the multiple viewpoint type of story until he has been selling for several years, and has been serious ly writing for at least 5 years.

I am a pragmatist in this business. That means if you can do something and make your reader accept it, it does not matter at all whether you have written your story according to the rules. The only judge is a reader. If he says your story is not convincing it does not matter whether you have followed all the rules, and have furnished a sworn affidavit to that effect, or to the facts—for the story has failed to achieve an emotional and intellectual effect on the reader. This is one court where there is no appeal, and no "fix".

Do not construe this article as an attempt to make a fool of a great editor. Bob Erisman knows what he is talking about. We all of us would like to see a lot more multiple viewpoint stories. They are stimulating, exciting. But they have to be written so they achieve the effect intended. Elva and I often read stories in top magazines where the author and the editor have made the same mistake that Bob has slipped into here. Getting away from the eternal one viewpoint story does not necessarily get you away from a formula. You can write corny, cliché plots, and do them in multiple viewpoints. You can also write fresh, original stories and keep them within a single viewpoint. Ideas, skill, imagination are what we need, not "freedom".

REWRITE

NEWS AND COMMENT IN THE MARKET PLACE

AMERICAN BOY—MARK TRAIL, Ted Kesting, 1109 Northwestern Bank Bldg., Minneapolis 2, Minn., quarterly adventure magazine for "teen age" boys (and girls), has now passed its first birthday. Started under the title MARK TRAIL it is now changing over gradually to AMERICAN BOY, a famous name in 'teen age literature. Eventually, MARK TRAIL is to be dropped.

Ted Kesting tells us: "I am sorry I can't give you news that we are an increasingly important market for free lance writers. Operating still on a quarterly basis, we have accumulated an almost unbelievable quantity of mail in a short while. Consequently for the moment we are practically no market at all."

Nevertheless, this is a market that bears watching. The "Summer, 1952" carried no fiction, but was full of unusual adventure articles, and at least 3 feature picture stories. The book leans heavily on pictures, & the drawings of Ed Dodd, including the latter's comic strip story of "Mark Trail".

The PORT ARTHURAN, Maxwell W. Cook, Box 1081, Port Arthur, Texas, is a local publication, edited, strangely enough, by a Massachusetts man whose cousin lives right here in Lunenburg. Happening to see the February issue, I checked. Here is his reply:

"That was something of a record for me to use 2 fiction stories in one month. Usually I don't use any. When I do, however, it's always a local individual. (Often a member of the staff. Ed.) The publication is almost entirely a local phenomenon; fiction as such, doesn't interest us very much. I am more interested in the writer as a local product—than I am in what he writes.

"Now I don't say that I would never accept anything from an outsider. I might, if it pertained to the oil, rice or shipping industries or had a South Texas or Louisiana slant. I've been paying 1¢ a word, and prefer 3,000 words or less."

We cite this magazine as one of those individual and specialized markets that every writer finds occasionally useful for a very limited appeal ms. This one is handled like a newspaper. The editor terms himself a "reformed free lance", who became a publisher, as the "only way I could get what I wrote—published." A nice guy.

Experience Meeting: Stanley M. Kenney reports that "one of my entries in the Writers' DIGEST short story contest placed. Almost immediately — (an advertising agent. Ed.) wrote, offering to handle my winning entry, and the rest of my stuff. Terms: the 'usual 10% and \$15 per year'."

Our comment: non-advertising agents don't usually require a retainer fee. This critic

agent, if memory serves, used to specialize in the syndicate short short field, a market that is practically non-existent now. Late-ly, his advertisements have carried the announcement of a proposed anthology of short shorts, requiring, we believe, author "participation" through purchase of a number of copies.

Re: Writers' Conferences: here is a bare-hand comment by one of the founders and active directors of one conference concerning another conference. We publish it because it contains some important generalizations that may help some writers to benefit more another year from attending a conference that this comment has helped them to select wisely. It will help some teachers of writing to better serve their pupils. For its plain speech is constructively concise and practical, not merely bitter or indulging in personalities.

"Frankly, the thing I didn't like at —, was its clannishness even then. And the cold-blooded, academic attitude of the workshop-leaders. I'm not speaking so much for myself as for some conferees I talked with. They all seemed to have the same feeling of discouragement and frustration when they left. That should not be. In the classroom, where the student is taking creative writings as just another course, or because it looks like an easy way to make money, you can tell them a ms. is no good. But when you're working with selling writers who presumably know what it is all about, and what they are doing (even if they may be wrong), you need a different approach. That kind of person needs to be told what is wrong, yes, but also that it is wrong, and why."

There is a lot of good advice for writers and teachers in that paragraph. No matter how hard a critic tramples on a ms., it's an important part of his job to send the writer home feeling he has learned something or that he has made some professional progress. That is one of the big things summer conferences can do for writers: widen their experience, stimulate and inspire them. On many occasions writers have told me that the full impact of a conference has not been immediately felt. For good thoughts and some bits of advice given by the staff have only come out as the following winter slips by. It is also true, that the more a really creative, constructive teacher succeeds in explaining why a method or piece of writing is "wrong", the harder he can apply the blue pencil and still not fill the writer with that feeling of black frustration. It is not always possible to explain to a writer why his method is wrong. He may not be ready yet to "see", or the teacher may not be able to achieve a creative approach to the individual ms., although the general principle is transparently clear to him. But as our correspondent points out, the one sure way to fail is to adopt a classroom (lecture) method of teaching. It is essential for the teacher and writer always to work as a creative team, to talk and

REWRITE

think in terms of writing and selling, never of art, or writing after it has cooled & been published. That is the great danger at conferences. The staff member has constantly to be on his guard, lest his approach become that of the detached, impersonal critic or teacher, who merely offers an abstract set of principles. And that is what writers must continually watch for: the staff member who gives of himself, takes a personalized, creative interest in the student before him both as a writer and a human being. It is a rare gift, and one that tends to boil away, as the human machine gets older and greater effort has to be laid out to achieve the same expenditure of fruitful energy.

As a final word, our correspondent states that she feels just as strongly about those "big-magazine" editors, who "go around from conference to conference, selling the conference on the idea that they are desperately in need of material, will buy from them, etc." We at REWRITE agree with this thought. Many of these editors and publishers are patently using the conferences as sounding-boards to advertise their magazines. Others, quite sincere, fail to make the necessary qualification. Of course they are looking for promising new writers, for the mss. that are unusual, off the beaten track and will help to round out their inventory. But they leave a beginning or inexperienced writer radiantly hopeful that his next mss. will stick. Such is not the case—unless he had achieved the competence and technical skill that separates a smooth, finished big league ballplayer from the rank sandlotter. To the extent that conferences support and give authority to this Cinderella legend, they are helping to perpetuate a fraud. With our correspondent, the editors of REWRITE say, all honor to the editor, writer or staff member, who really and truly gives of himself and his practical experience.

The U. S. Post Office. Mail that is at all misdirected, is now being returned, without any attempt to check on the whereabouts of a recipient within the same city. (The P. O., it is explained, no longer gives directory service.) This causes delay, additional expense in remailing charges. It also increases materially the P. O. deficit, because no revenue is earned on the return trip. Those who use the mails are blamed for this deficit, whether they are to blame or not.

As we understand the law, no new permanent clerks may be added to the postal personnel. This shortsighted policy on the part of Congress, when added to the present administration's use of the Post Office as a sheltering place for deserving Democrats, is rapidly making a shambles of our once proud public service in handling mail. Writers, more than most taxpayers, are paying twice & being hindered in the exercise of their normal profession by such political chicanery.

I urge that you take appropriate action & remember this shortchanging in November.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR HAPPY WRITING

Good health and vitality are a very important phase of writing. Here are some rules, which I came across in BETTER HEALTH, Julius Dintenfass, Science Sideliights Co., Brooklyn 17, N. Y. I have adapted the discussion of them for writers.

(1) Thou Shalt Fill the Lungs With Fresh Air. Breath is life, and as you absorb fresh air each day you invigorate your mind and body.

(2) Thou Shalt Eat More Green Vegetables and Fruits. Everyone has his own ideas about the right theories of eating. But as you replenish the energy you use up, and eat under as favorable conditions as possible, you place yourself in a good position to make the most of what talents you may have.

(3) Thou Shalt Drink Plenty of Water. Like any good engine, your body needs a good circulation system, and this should be kept in active operation.

(4) Thou Shalt Exercise. "Lack of motion... leads to atrophy or death." You are not merely a thinking machine. As you exercise your muscles, so do you extend the flexibility of mind and emotions. One can live for the body alone, but a strong body is one way to gain health and vitality, two important parts of your equipment as a writer.

(5) Thou Shalt Learn to Rest. "Work has never killed anyone—fatigue through improper, overlong maintained tension kills millions. Relaxation is rest." Rest for a few minutes and shift your attention at "stopping places" in your work. You will find you're able to work longer hours and do better work.

(6) Thou Shalt Control Thine Emotions. "The emotions are the essence of all radiant life, without these man is an automaton. (And without a sense for them a man cannot be a writer, a creative artist. Ed.) But destructive emotions poison the blood stream, tear down brain cells and kill the body tissues." They destroy your ability to concentrate & function as a writer.

(7) Thou Shalt Keep Good Posture. "The foundation of vigorous health—is good body alignment." Sit tall, stand tall, walk tall, think and write tall (big, not petty)!

(8) Thou Shalt Love. "Love is the great cleanser, the divine factor in human life, the redeeming and ennobling potency. It is love that sweetens life. Love is the essence of civilization...Be spendthrift of love. Live the love-tinctured life and you will draw men to you as to an oasis. Love is health, love is happiness, love is success." Love something, someone in your writing. And let it not be yourself.

(9) Thou Shalt Have Faith. "Faith turns defeat into victory, fear into hope, impossibilities into glorious achievements. with

REWRITE

faith nothing is impossible. We are organized for triumph. We can all be conquerors. Believe in yourself, your mission, your fellows, the world in which you live, the essential rightness of the Infinite Power behind all life."

(10) Thou Shalt Work. "Life's rich rewards belong to the man who is not afraid to work, to do his best, to do more than he is—paid for. Glory in your work. (But be not vain about it. Be ever teachable, eager to learn. EA.) Work never kills—it cures. It is the great Healer. It purifies and keeps life sane and wholesome. It vanquishes worry, tension, and destructive emotion." Amen. Find a blessed dedication, a high purpose and usefulness in your writing, even if it is only for your local paper. As you find these things, it is likely your writing will carry you out of the small, obscure world that confines you.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE MARKET

A new book coming up this fall that sounds like a useful tool for writers: Funk & Wagnall's STANDARD HANDBOOK OF PREPOSITIONS, CONJUNCTIONS, AND RELATIVE PRONOUNS & ADVERBS, \$2.75. Many such phrases in use today, have become stereotypes. If you depart from familiar clichés of this kind without a practical reason, you distract the reader automatically from the meaning of your ms.

REWRITE is now listed under "Booktrade Periodicals" in The AMERICAN BOOKTRADE DIRECTORY.

Doubleday & Co., Dr. Anston C. Pegis, editorial director, 575 Madison Ave., NYC 22, has formed a Catholic Textbook Division.

Dryden Press, 31 W. 45th St., NYC 19, took over some time ago Wm. Sloane Associates' college dept.

Now Wm. Sloane Associates has been bought by Thayer Hobson and a group of associates. It will, apparently, be retained as a name, but all production details will be merged into the joint operation of William Morrow and Co., M. Barrows & Co., M.S. Mill Co., and Woman's Press.

Ballantine Books, new paper-bound books, is to distribute through the International Circulation Division, Hearst Corp. (GOOD HOUSEKEEPING, COSMOPOLITAN, HARPER'S BAZAAR, and TOWN & COUNTRY.) They have 108,000 outlets: newsstands, drugstores and bookstores.

Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, Eng., which publishes 3,000 titles in all fields, is now represented in the U.S. by St. Martin's Press 103 Park Ave., NYC 17.

The Macmillan Co., 60 5th Ave., NYC 11, a publisher of American books, will continue to function as such. (Just to make the picture more confusing, some books published by Macmillan & Co. (Eng.) are published in Ameri-

ca by other publishers than Macmillan & Co. OF The Macmillan Co. (Want it drawn out?)

Aubrey Publications, 342 Madison Ave., NYC 17. (New address.)

FLAIR, suspended a year ago, is being restored as FLAIR Annual, edited by the former editor, Fleur Cowles, but published under the imprint of Random House. October, \$10.

Homework. "The Mystery of Literary Creation" by Stanton A. Coblenz, PRAIRIE SCHOONER. A literary magazine that does not pay, but is interested in promising young writers and is neither too literary nor "pseudo". I find it very readable. Lowry Charles Wimberly, ed., Frederick L. Christensen, assoc. edit., The Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 8, Neb. It is one of the oldest quality magazines.

A.D. (1952), Thomas Francis Ritt & Dorothy Tooker, 109 Greenwich Ave., NYC 14, is somewhat similar, though younger (it's now in its 3rd volume, quarterly) and more youthful in its editing. Takes itself a bit more seriously, too, I would judge from only one copy. A fresh, unconventional interview with William Carlos Williams (fresh in the original & uncorrupted meaning of the word) in the winter issue led off and proved revealing.

MAGAZINE M, Robert J. Levin, Mag. Management, 270 Park Ave., NYC 16, is a new book readying under the Goodman house-flag. No date on the prospectus we received July 18th. For men and women readers, all ages, but emphasis on 20 - 35 age group, fairly prosperous.

No fiction. Emphasis: business, children, celebrities, communities, crime, family, entertainment fields, fashion & food, personalities, the home, medicine & health, movies, science, sex, self-help. Balanced proportion articles, first-person & humor pieces. Will not use gag cartoons. Pay: Leads, up to \$500; average articles, about \$200. Ditto for photo-essay of 4 - 6 pages. Pays within 1 week of acceptance. Mr. Levin says he is interested in new writers and talking over ideas.

Little Black Box. Frederick G. Ludwig, the head of Yale University's Photographic Dept., has invented a duplicating device which enables anyone doing research to copy any material he desires, even on a rounded page in a book. "Contours" is portable and its possible for one to develop his own prints. The whole thing costs about \$60. Handy gadget.

"Forever Scarlet". Under this provocative title Kenneth J. Foreman, columnist for WNU weekly newspapers (1,700 of them) and PRESBYTERIAN OUTLOOK, (Aug. 4) took a sharp look at what he believes is the low level of reading done by and in the women's clubs. He invites correspondence about it; too. (Bold & brash, I call it!) Better look it up.

"Thank you!" Lydia Lion Roberts sent us a sheaf of editorial letters. Very helpful.

REWRITE

A MORNING AT OCEAN PARK

Dick Merrifield, editor of YANKEE, made a strong plea against writers becoming "over-commercial" at the second workshop discussion group during the Maine Writers' Conference. He urged writers to make no compromise with the serious writing they might feel an urge to do. "Even if you never sell it, get it down on paper," he advised. "And, please, never throw it away, or destroy it! You may want to come back to it; you may find something good and usable in it later."

His theme was that without "dedication" to some kind of an idea, without some sense of urgency from within, even the most commercial writing would lack fire and substance. A growing tendency among writers to look down on serious writing and to avoid any but the most practical and profitable writing, Dick considers a dangerous trend both for American writing and for the individual writer.

Closely woven into the fabric of this argument, Dick offered the parallel idea that a writer should never put off writing a ms. that exercises a compelling demand upon him. He stated that he knew well enough that the writer often was hampered by obligations to his family and responsibilities apart from a life devoted completely to creative writing. Each writer must inevitably work out a solution to his individual problems by himself. However, there remains a loyalty to the intangible of getting down on paper the great thoughts, works and important contributions to the world's storehouse represented by the printed word that every writer sees pass across his inner mind.

Dick went back to his earlier days as editor in New York. He recalled the many, many talented folk who "never got around to some fine project they had in mind to do tomorrow or the next day. In the busy hustle of a world of deadlines, they put off. They very nearly always became lost in a Sargasso Sea of small immediate responsibilities." Dick cited specific people he had known in editorial circles, some of whom had managed, by hook or by crook, to do on the side the big things they had dreamed of doing; and other busy folk who hadn't. (Thomas Wolfe was one of these who came to mind after the stimulating session was over. I recall Tom stretched out on the grass of the Harvard Yard one afternoon, "writing" in thin air, before another member of the old 47 Workshop course for playwrights and myself, a novel I think was more powerful than any that he actually got down on paper. It concerned the parallel of America and a family he knew intimately, moving across the rich, uncut forest of our virgin land. It was a thriller. But tragically, he never got around to writing it.)

Dan Kelly, editor of the verse department of the PINE CONE, and I sat beside each other on a bench as Dick talked beneath towering pines in the lovely grove at Ocean Park. He leaned over and commented to me concern-

ing Dick's idealism and sincerity. And then he added a thought that should have come out in the subsequent discussion, but somehow got overlooked. "Bill," he whispered, "look at the way writers everywhere are having to 'split' their personalities. They earn their living with one part of their brain, and do things they want to do with another." Dan is a good one to talk of such things! Besides working full time as a writer and all around "voice" on the air for an Augusta, Me., radio station, he edits his poetry column, and there, in the pine grove showed me a science-fiction magazine with a by-line signed by his own name.

That is something to think about. I don't know whether it is a good idea, at least in the terrific pressure and tensions it bears down upon the shoulders (and the minds, and hearts!) of writers. But it is a part of American life today, and you have to take it for the time being at least. But it heavily underscores Dick's point about "dedicating" one's self to the really important writing, that even the least of us can do. And ought to do.

Elva and I see too many writers, who permit themselves to drift on their Sargasso Sea of mss. that are easy to sell, or which allow them a small measure of publicity & importance, which they mistake for glamor and a place in the writing world. They seem unwilling to tackle the hard jobs that appear to be beyond their reach and certain to bring them only discouragement and rejection alip chastisement for years to come. As Dan said there on the bench, "a writer doesn't suddenly 'arrive' or get the quality that makes him good in whatever he is trying to do. He is growing every minute, even when he is picking up ideas or having troubles at home with the kids all sick, or something."

Another variation on this theme that Dan & I discussed as we sprawled there under those tall, straight pines, was why don't writers get around to writing some of the ideas that make them itch to get a typewriter under the fingers. I advanced the theory that some of them enjoy talking more. "Writing is a lonely business, and hard work," I said. "Just the sheer business of talking is a lot easier and takes less energy. And so some writers spend their energy talking instead of writing...and our actual time to write is so short. Before one knows it he wakes up finds that ten years, twenty, thirty, have slipped through his fingers like sand through an hour glass."

And so, Dan and Dick and Doris and Rhima, and many of the rest of us settled a few of the questions that make writers' minds, and tongues, restless. We pinned them down, and good, at least till we meet again and—have some more good ideas! Writers' conferences, surely, are good places to congregate, when everyone is generous and gives out freely.. As they did this year at Philadelphia and Ocean Park. The constant danger, at all con-

REWRITE

ferences, is that the members of the staff, and the more talented conferees, will become self-conscious and will withdraw into a narrow little clique, the members of which, often in unconscious selfishness, eat and talk by themselves. They are the real losers.

Dan Kelly noticed that the first day when as guests of the Conference, a half-dozen of us quite unintentionally sat together instead of spreading out among the students, as the happy custom is at Ocean Park. Looking down the table, Dan remarked: "Isn't it curious, how some of the best talk bubbles out every time a group of us get in a corner this way—talk we should be sharing with the conferees." But at Ocean Park in the two years of my experience, the staff has never got high hat. The good talk is shared remarkably well. Perhaps that is why the informal evenings at Rhima Sturtevant's house after the lectures are so popular and endanger the ability of a sleepy student body to get up for Loring Williams' "inspiration" party on the beach beginning at 7:30 A.M. (Shsh! Loring, commuting this year from Portland, didn't get there himself, to lead the largest group ever!)

REPORT ON A JUVENILE MAGAZINE

HUMPTY DUMPTY'S Magazine, Parents' Institute, Harold Schwartz, 52 Vanderbilt Ave., NYC 17, sent us its form requirements sheet instead of an individual report when we asked for details in a personal letter to the editor. Stories for Beginning Readers—750 to 1,000 words. Primarily 1st & 2nd grade word lists; words above this level should be kept to a minimum. Contractions & compound words acceptable; repetition, yes, but not as much as in school Readers. Plots interesting "as possible". Fewer the words the better.

Read-Aloud Stories—3rd & 4th grade, keep inside 1,000 words. "Picture book" stories with realistic or fanciful plots, but avoid mama airplane, papa airplane and baby airplane stories and similar types."

Tell-Me Stories—designed to be read by a parent silently, then retold to the child. A plot should allow for "variations and side development by the teller (this is a neat trick, if you can do it. Ed.) and lead to a strong climax. Typical childhood experiences suitable: moving to a new house, a market trip, new family in the neighborhood. (Note: these are so trite, and will be seized upon by so many unthinking writers, you will have to be good, and we mean good, to sell them. Ed.) Length: 1,000 to 1,200 words.

Literary Market Place, Anne J. Richter..., R. H. Bowker Co., 52 W. 45th St., NYC 19..., \$4.50. This year's edition is larger. Contains diversified lists of names & addresses useful to writers. Valuable reference.

Duplicate (File) Copies of REWRITE. A second subscription delivered to the same address, costs only \$1 per year. Good to clip.

THIS MONTH'S BOOKS

YOUR HOME & MINE. Frank Watts. The Naylor Co. \$3.00. A simply written handbook for owners of homes. Defines and protects your rights. The author is a top-level mortgage bank official in the Southwest, and a member of the WCS Family. A valuable reference book.

HOW TO WRITE A BOOK. Cecil Hunt. Philosophical Library. \$3.00. This is one of those curious books that have been imported in sheets from England and bound up here. Despite the English background and references, this is a useful book because it tells writers all about the practical job of planning, designing a book for a special public, and a good deal of the problems arising till you get a book in print. It is concerned with actually writing a book, not writing it more artistically. Few writers consider this angle.

BOOKS WE CAN RECOMMEND

PAYING POETRY MARKETS. Virginia Randall and Russ Davison. \$2. A remarkably well edited, useful list of 475 markets that pay. We have sold nearly a dozen copies and the demand is increasing. The editors do a fine job keeping it up to date, too. Real service.

WRITING YOUR POEM. Lawrence John Zillman... \$2.75. A very good book on the practical business of writing good poetry.

WRITING FOR CHILDREN. Erick Berry & Herbert Best. \$2.50. An excellent book by two authors who sell the field themselves.

A MANUAL OF STYLE. The Univ. of Chicago Press standard text. \$4. A "must" for all who desire to present good working mass; or to edit and revise their own proofs.

CREATIVE FICTION WRITING. Dorothy McCleary. \$2.50. A popular, inexpensive book on writing fiction.

Note: buy your books through our BOOK CLUB. You earn a Book Dividend and save money.

The WCS Circulating Library. Save even more money by reading the books you are interested in before you buy them! It costs \$2, and postage both ways. A month to read them.

IN YOUR HANDS...KEEP IT GOOD!

Over the years the WCS Family has come to be recognized as an honorable and decent aggregation of writers and allied members of a professional community interested in handling the printed word. Because Bill & Elva do not advertise REWRITE or WRITERS' COUNSEL SERVICE, and the associated services these offer to writers, the WCS Family, which counts everyone who reads REWRITE or uses any of the services, is made up mostly of those attracted by our philosophy of fair dealing.

To be a member of the WCS Family is now a

REWRITE

mild warranty that the individual will give good measure. We have had tangible evidence that editors familiar with our reputation & work in the past, are receptive to writers, who report they are members of the WCS Family. It won't get you an automatic check or acceptance, but it does win you goodwill because editors know we set our standards high and that many of the Family work hard to aid us in keeping accurate, up-to-the-minute information about markets. They know, too, that while there are exceptions to every rule, a member of the WCS Family is apt to present a serious and worthwhile proposition.

Point we wish to make is that our reputation and that of the Family rests to a considerable degree in the hands of every member who uses or abuses the common label. We have tried hard to make "WCS" and REWRITE & all our other smaller services stand for the best in the field of writing and selling. A single self-seeking writer, who puts personal ambitions and/or inferior workmanship ahead of the sterling quality we try to stand for, tears down a part of the fine record & good workmanship that we and hundreds of writers have accumulated over the years.

We have written this little sermon regarding WCS because it really applies to each & every writer in his own capacity as a craftsman. Yesterday afternoon, we had two platinum blonde girls knock on our door, attempting to sell subscriptions to put them through college. Their rapacious deceit and unskillfully overdone high pressure salesmanship in an amusing way dramatized for Silva and me a tendency among a certain type of writers to rush to market and try to sell editors some half-baked gold brick. They think that just because they want a little money and fame & are impatient to get immediate results, the world won't see the cheap and tawdry second rateness of their product and their talent.

That is one reason why we constantly tell writers to have nothing to do with the vanity publishers and critic-agents. We cannot all be geniuses, but we can put our best foot forward. We can send a man to represent us, not a charlatan or a pimp. And I can assure you editors, the good, worthwhile ones, respect the writers who do not try to impersonate something they are not. To sum it up, a writer should remember always, every waking moment of his life, that he's building a cumulative reputation. He should try to make it as fine and clean and honorable as he possibly can. Everyone makes mistakes, or suffers at one time or another from lack of experience. But the writer who does business, or works through shabby or incompetent representatives, covers himself with some of the tarnish on their wings. We can't all be let team men, but we can avoid the second rate, as we would the devil. Stand eternally—for the best that is in you, and demand that everyone who represents you, does the same. Be slow to sign coupons and what the unscrupulous euphemistically call "contracts".

A FINE EDITORIAL REPORT

COMPACT, Claire Glass, Parents' Institute, 52 Vanderbilt Ave., NYC 17, wrote us a personal letter about this market's needs:

"The magazine is a monthly, called the "Pocket Magazine for Young People", boys & girls 15 to 19 years. We are buying free lance articles, but they have to be geared to the interests of young people in their senior years of high school and first years of college.

"We are looking for stories 2,500 words in length, dealing with everyday problems of our readers. However, we want fresh insights into these problems and more original 'situations' than those dealing with a date for the prom or a part in the school play.

"As far as articles go, here we want dating advice, self-improvement, career & school guidance, personality stories, sports & general pieces of interest to this group.

"Writers should keep in mind that boys and girls of 15 to 19 are very mature these days, and are, in fact, going off to war and getting married. Both subject matter of the article and the style should reflect this maturity. Articles should be between 1,500 and 2,000 words. We pay approximately 10¢ a word on acceptance, and we work 5 or 6 months in advance on seasonal material."

Thank you, Miss Glass. We consider this a model editorial letter. It not only gives a picture of the physical requirements, but a synthesis of the philosophy that shapes the editorial policy. And some insight into the way the editor approaches her job.

REWRITE works on the basis that this kind of frank editorial report works two ways: it (1) gives capable, serious writers a lot of practical data, which helps them to hit the target square and true. (2) It shows others in a tactful way that they cannot hope to hit the market, unless they come up to a minimum standard. We believe that such reports help to train writers in the serious business of their craft, and that if only a few writers are taught how to take their relations with editors more serious, the overall relations between writers and editors will be greatly improved—for the benefit of both.

REWRITE urges both writers and editors to keep the flow of this type of individualized report moving across its pages. We will print them as rapidly as they come in. So, we urge editors to cooperate with us, to help us reduce the great mass of mss. that writers slam at editors with their eyes closed. And we urge writers whenever we print letters of this kind to let the editor know the time spent on them is appreciated. And also I urge writers constantly to suggest to the friendly writers of their acquaintance that REWRITE is their friend, ready to give writers an accurate report of their needs.

REWRITE

CAN YOU, TOO, DO THIS?

The problem of what to do when you dry up and can't write effectively, is a very real one to all writers. Here is an experience a writer who sells, related to us a few days ago. I shall not reveal the author's name.

"I am very tired, creatively, Bill. I am aware that the few shorts I wrote immediately after the novel's completion are away below par. They didn't go, and as I reread the mss., why not is no riddle.

"I believe therefore, that knowing me, it is a good idea to completely forget writing for awhile. To think and act as if it didn't matter whether I ever wrote again or not... Instead of fighting it and forcing myself, I shall relax, try to see interesting things, and do them, too. I feel sure that more, and new ideas will come to me. But at the moment I feel also that I haven't a decent idea in my head. So when — Magazine returned a ms. today, I decided the time had come to let go.

"I wrote Miss N, the editor, who has always been wonderful with suggestions, and I told her that I was creatively too tired to turn out good work. So if she didn't hear from me for a period of time, to assume I was gathering steam, and that I had not forgotten her. I felt that was a good move.

"I've tried several times to write & have filled oceans of paper, only to tear it up, page after page, the next day. I had 2 perfectly good story ideas, and could not make either one jell."

As a p.s. our friend added, "I plan to keep a jotting down notebook during this sterile spell." (Do you think writing doesn't matter to this woman? She won't be able to get back to her desk quick enough. Her problems to stay away long enough!)

This is one of the reasons why I say that it takes courage to be a writer. And clear-eyed vision. On occasion you have to recognize the time when it's best to turn your back on everything. To have faith that God understands what is best for you & is in control of the situation as it develops. You need in a sense to re-think the continuity of the line of interest & and to realize that you've only reached a pause and a fork in the road, not a period & dead-end.

To use my old analogy, your pitcher is drained. Before it can pour it must be filled. It is a very comforting thing to realize that you can make the break and that all in good time you will be typing again. The thing is to plan and arrange, so you can gather material.

WATCH YOUR HOUSEKEEPING

In getting facts, personal names, figures and the like into any ms. you write, never, trust your memory. Even if you have a photographic mind. You will find that your memory plays tricks on you, inverts figures and gives you an approximate instead of an exact copy of the material you wish to reproduce.

And when you go into print you lose every bit of your isolation. You are not just one person writing at a desk alone. You have responsibility to be right, absolutely right. A person related to the facts you use expects that. The publisher may lose a lot of money if your facts are wrong. And finally a reader does not like to be misinformed. Indeed, his wealth or even life may be risked by depending too much that you are speaking "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

Opinions are a very different thing. Many of us may disagree as to the nature of true facts or thoughts. We may disagree as to the reaction of a character under stress. That is what makes fiction fascinating. So long as you are convincing, the reader will take what you give him. But when you use facts, a reader has the right to expect that you are absolutely correct so far as any good reporter can check and double check. To sum it up, this is one way you can please an editor and make more certain that your ms. will be accepted instead of rejected. And a surprising by-product of this self-discipline will be, you will find, that your scripts take on an abler, neater, better organized appearance. There will be fewer type-slips, grammatical mistakes and tortured sentences. The careful eye and discriminating mind you develop for factual accuracy will fan out and go to work on every aspect of your script. And I think you will agree that is a good thing.. Writing and selling are serious businesses. The prizes go to those who take pains.

SOMETHING TO AVOID

Frequently we run into stories that don't achieve their full effect, because the author generalizes about the characters. He calls them "a woman" or "the girl" or "the dog". (In this story this could have been solved just by writing: "Jimmie ran after the strange dog."

The point is that we tend to think and visualize in terms of the specific rather than vague and abstract or impersonal figures. Foreigners are constantly impressed and disconcerted, too, by the tendency of Americans to be "Bill" and "Hank" or what-have-you after 5 minutes' conversation.

Same weakness applies to impersonal viewpoint also.

HOLLYWOOD and the literary critics, frequently poles apart, are on common ground nowadays in their complaints against current fiction. "Eighty-five percent of the stuff I've been seeing just doesn't stand a chance with the studios," one Coast agent with many movie sales to his credit told me recently. "Most of it's too negative, too introspective, and it leaves you feeling, 'What's the use?'" Diana Trilling, speaking for the critics—or at least a sizable number of them—in the *New York Times Book Review* a few Sundays ago, noted that fiction doesn't command anything like the public it used to. Her explanation was that people can't get interested in novels which are "fashion drawings of what the sophisticated modern mind wears in its misery."

PAUL S. NATHAN
PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY

REWRITE

REPORTS FROM THE EDITORS

Christian Science MONITOR, Millicent J. Taylor, education editor, 1 Norway St., Boston 15, Mass., told a member of the WGS Family, recently, "We don't like to run articles that tell folk what to do. Our approach is to report what someone has done and present it as a good idea that they might like to try themselves." A very subtle and useful distinction for an article writer to note down in a corner of his experience.

David C. Cook Publishing Co., Elgin, Ill., uses a neat reject slip. It has a brief bit of polite sorrow written in the form of a letter at the top. But space is left for a personalized report below. Some acceptances are written on this sheet, too.

The NEW YORKER, 25 W. 43rd St., NYC, which does not bother to list the city on its rejection slips, told a writer recently, "We do not borrow from other magazines, except in cases of unintentional humor." (With the aid of a NEW YORKER blue pencil, some of the "slips" torn from their context in the other magazines or newspapers, have seemed very close to libel, in our humble opinion. It's a form of sport akin to trapping wild animals with the more barbarous steel traps. Basically destructive and malicious, we don't recommend it to writers.)

The SHORELINER, 321 State St., Portsmouth, N. H., defines its areas as follows: "Our range of coverage extends from Newburyport, Mass., to Kennebunk, Me. They are not interested, therefore, in stories about extensions of the area. Keep inside the limits they set."

FANTASTIC WORLDS, Edward W. Ludwig, 1942 Telegraph Ave., Stockton, Cal., is a smallish fantasy mag., whose author-editor is an active WGS Family member. First issue is out and the editor in his author's position appreciates the unenviable profession of being an editor.

He offers an amusing and instructive note on his experience. "No, the notices in the 'writers' mags.' brought very few subscriptions and fewer usable mss. About 3 stories, I believe, out of around 100. I've learned, incidentally, one thing: there are no 'good stories' rejected by editors because they're by beginners. If there's a good, salable story that hasn't found a home, then so far I've not seen it...And virtually all stories I've accepted from free lancers have been rewritten to my suggestions." Common experience among editors, I would say.

Funk & Wagnalls Co., 153 East 24th St., NYC 10, book publishers, have absorbed: William Sloane and several other members of William Sloane Associates, which is now controlled, of course, by William Morrow & Co.

COLLECTOR-HOBBYIST, Denver, Colo., we are informed, is now largely devoted to news of hobby clubs. Subscription fees are charged,

writers inform us, against a writer's first accepted ms., or succeeding ones, when subscriptions expire. An unsatisfactory method of doing business.

National Writers' Club Talent Clinic. As a service to writers and one more step in a continuous campaign to defeat the unscrupulous services that seek to prey on writers, REWRITE and WRITERS' COUNSEL SERVICE offered to contribute one (1) free analysis of a writer's ms. (a sort of vocational advisory service) to the NWC Talent Clinic each year on or about October 1st. The first of these will be given next month. NWC, with which we work closely in guarding and advancing best interests of writers, has accepted this offer (open to members of NWC only.)

Vermont Newspaper Corp. has sold one of its chain of papers, the WINDSOR JOURNAL. High taxes and inflated costs will cause further sales of this type, if the American citizens don't beat some sense into the brains of the greedy politicians.

Federal Trade Commission. International Publishers' Service, Los Angeles, Cal., charged with misrepresentation in handling orders for subscriptions.

Ditto: Astro Distributing Corp., Quarter Books, and Magazine Village, Inc., have stipulated they will not in the future alter the title or copyright credit of reprint books in order to give the impression that the book is a new one, being published for the first time.

Ditto: Bethany College & Divinity School, no permanent location, has been ordered to discontinue representing it is an accredited institution by any standard or accepted accrediting organization.

Ditto: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, Ill., has been ordered to stop representing that a "15 for 1" plan or "School Advancement Program" is designed primarily for the benefit of any or a single school. And that prices, listed as "special, reduced, or applicable, only for a limited time", are not in fact the regular prices.

Ditto: Standard Distributors, Chicago, Ill., have been ordered to stop representing that the "New Standard Encyclopaedia" is a new encyclopaedia. Also other sales devices.

Note: the FTC is investigating a complaint, that a certain steel mfg. co. and its sales representatives have been insinuating that a set of aluminum cooking pots and pans offer a better chance to become inoculated with cancer! (How low can business competition be come!) This allegation, if actually uttered, is considered baseless & untrue by the FTC. The point is, though, that these FTC bulletins are free to any citizen of the U. S. & we urge our readers to apply for them. They are a source of interest & protection.

Address: FTC, Washington 25, D. C.

REWRITE

THE PROBLEM OF SELLING FILLERS

In regard to that vexatious problem of the fillers that just disappear into a void, as it were, Mrs. Ruth Curtis offers this practical suggestion:

"Why not just add a note to the filler to the effect that: 'If this filler is not taken up within one month (two months or whatever seems best), I shall feel free to submit it elsewhere.'"

The only trouble with that is that there's no allowance or free play for editorial individual policy. The READERS' DIGEST, for instance, has told some writers they would be on the safe side to submit elsewhere when 3 months has elapsed. But other editors might like more or less time. Quite unintentionally, you might be dictating to an editor and running counter to his policy. Therefore, it would be a case of where your mss. would get immediate delivery to the wastebasket. You would not know it, however until the expiration of your self-imposed time limit. Indeed, you might go on submitting to that editor for years without ever suspecting that you were causing your own rejection factor.

One of the complications is that editors, as they have explained it to me, sometimes, not always, have filler columns or space set up two months ahead. And since they may for printing purposes have to work 6 months before publication, that could mean their purchases were being made 7 to 8 months ahead. If there happens to be any seasonal or special news angles to the fillers they read or seek, this might make it difficult for them to make up their minds within one month, or two.

Without trying to excuse dilatory acceptances or rejections, I can readily see why, from the editor's viewpoint, it is essential sometimes to have a file on hand of fillers that might fit in. Fillers are naturally perishable. You have what you think is a good one lined up and then a competing magazine covers the same ground ahead of you. A department must also have a certain balance of interest. You don't want 6 fillers about George Washington in the same issue even in February. You want to have one filler which will appeal to family readers, another to a sports fan, a third to women, etc. It adds up to a nice weighing of editorial requirements and skilled timing in your buying. An editor may therefore, wish to hold a filler for several months and try to work it into a general overall plan. Regrettably, after two or three months, he may find it just doesn't fit in with other, better fillers, so he is forced to discard it. But I doubt whether a majority of writers would wish to miss that chance that it might have made the grade.

My own solution to this problem would be, I think, that I would try to hit a particular editor not with one special filler, but

with several. Naturally, therefore, I would study the market carefully. I would try to be right on the target with every filler I submitted. If I failed over a period of four or five submissions, I would start to find out the reasons why.

I think at this point I would write the editor a personal letter. I would tell him I'd been trying to hit his department, that I'd made a special study and still had not aimed correctly. I'd tell him frankly I wanted to find out why. That I was not going to be defeated that easily. I'd point out I didn't expect him to remember my three or four mss. out of the thousands he must have read. So, I was including copies of them, not for him to read specially, but merely to clarify the problem. And I would ask him what his individual policy was regarding building up his inventory and holding mss.

I am willing to bet 9 editors out of ten, under such circumstances, would be impressed by your interest and would write a short personal letter of encouragement and advice about how to hit him. Some editors would even glance over the fillers appended, or have one of his readers do it for him, and write you a memo of why in general terms the mss. did not fill his requirements.

Then you would have something to go on, & you would not be dictating in future if you stated that you would consider your fillers "dead" after the lapse of the time he stated was the usual time they held promising or doubtful material. You would also have some rules of thumb with which to narrow down on the target. And you would be wise to be extra careful to eliminate all possible rejection factors. If you were careful, you very certainly would eventually hit your editor. Or at the least, draw another letter or few words of further encouragement from him. It has been said that the SAT. EVE. POST builds quite a few of its feature article writers, gradually developing them in the back of the book. They like to try them out in the short lengths and then with greater confidence in these writers, they can work with them on the longer assignments.

It may seem foolish to work so hard on an initially so uncertain and low pay project. But if that is the case, why do you seek to sell the filler editor at all? Either a job is worth doing or it is not. And I can tell you that this lesson in how to hit a market will stand you in good stead when you shoot at the larger markets. It is the method the professional writer uses habitually. Indeed, this painstaking care in servicing an editor is one of the main differences between a writer who sells consistently and one whose sales are lucky shots in the dark. It perhaps defines the difference between just being a writer and just writing on the one hand and writing with editorial purpose. Trite as it may seem, try it some time. You will be surprised at the results you achieve. Good luck.

REWRITE

SOME FUNDAMENTALS OF VIEWPOINT

Viewpoint is one of the most difficult of all elements in a story for the inexperienced writer to learn to handle effectively. A writer need have no great trouble, however, if he will use commonsense and be consistent all the way through his story. The principle weakness for most writers is their inability to view the problem realistically or logically. It is necessary to see viewpoint as a means to an end. If you can once appreciate why viewpoint is so important, then you will no longer find it a dreadful bugaboo.

Let us look at a few of the fundamentals. By lining these up we will be able to get a good looksee at the problem.

(1) Communication. Viewpoint is your method of making contact with a reader. You start to tell him a story. Not unnaturally, he is eager to know whose story it is and what is the angle from which it is being told. You help him to understand what is expected, if you are crystal clear about these two parts of the story.

(2) Identification. The reader desires very much to identify himself with some one person in the story. He wants to feel that he's living the actual experience here and now. A skillful use of viewpoint makes this not only possible, but also emphasizes it sharply and clearly.

(3) Definition. I have seen many critics and teachers try to explain viewpoint. But very few of them make this point clear. Practically nine out of ten stories are told from a single viewpoint. But this viewpoint, although it may be that of the MC is frequently not presented from the angle of the MC! A distinction that is vitally important for a young writer to have called to his notice.

(4) Angles. Roughly speaking although there are many subtleties and refinements to viewpoint, there are only four angles:

(A) MC. Here we are the MC. We are inside of him. We see and hear and feel, as well as act and talk as he does. We are subjective, as far as he is concerned. We can go inside of him, but not of other characters. We can only observe what they do and say, and perhaps deduce from their expressions how they feel. Therefore, we are objective in regard to them.

(B) Participating Character. He is one taking part in the story. He stands outside or beside MC, and observes the story even as he takes an active or inactive part in it. He is subjective to himself and can think, and feel about the story and deduce in his mind and emotions how the MC must be feeling. He cannot go inside the MC any more than I can go inside of you. But it gives perspective.

(C) Observing Character. Still further away

from the MC. Perched on the edge of the story circle, he merely watches and thinks and feels about what is happening to the MC. He is an ideal angle from which to tell a story because he can gain detachment and a perspective. He captures the meaning and significance of the situation without losing completely that sense of identification with a MC. These two angles of (B) and (C) possess the power of the very good gossip. They can experience all the agony of the victim, yet they also can see what is happening to him. From a spectator's seat on the sidelines. So they can suck the egg dry of all of its succulent human interest flavor. They see what the MC is too close to events to see. Overtones and implications.

An observing character may or may not actually appear in the story. The author, you see, has the privilege of being a fly on the wall. Without really intruding, he peeps, he listens and he evaluates. But the characters live their story without any interference.

(D) The Author. This is an angle many writers use. It is possible, but not one we advise anyone ever to use. Because it reduces a story to a mere narrative at second hand, by someone definitely outside the perimeter of the story. It is reminiscent of an author stepping in front of the footlights, and explaining to the spectators every action as it takes place behind him on the stage. It handcuffs the players; it takes all sense of life out of the story. I saw a story written in this manner recently in a newspaper.. You would not have believed how stilted all the events sounded. Even a scenario can appear more exciting, if it is told as if really happening.

One of the reasons why this method fails, you see, is because the author not only has his hand on the characters and manipulates, nay, pushes them around; but also he sooner or later begins to assume the omniscient or all-seeing and -hearing powers of God. Violating the natural laws under which we live, he becomes subjective to all the characters and moves wherever he wishes within the story circle. We cannot go inside our friends. We are limited to one angle of vision.

(5) The Multiple Viewpoint. This is a method of telling a story that all inexperienced writers crave eagerly to use. They don't realize that their reason for wishing to use it is rarely an artistic reason. Rather, it is simply because they are floundering; they do not know how to maintain a steady continuity. So they think that by jumping here or there they can sustain their story.

The reason for shifting viewpoint (by using several angles) is always to give readers a greater insight into the emotional significance or meaning of an MC's experience. It is never done just to ease the strain of manipulating external events. It adds to the advantages of the (B) & (C) angles.